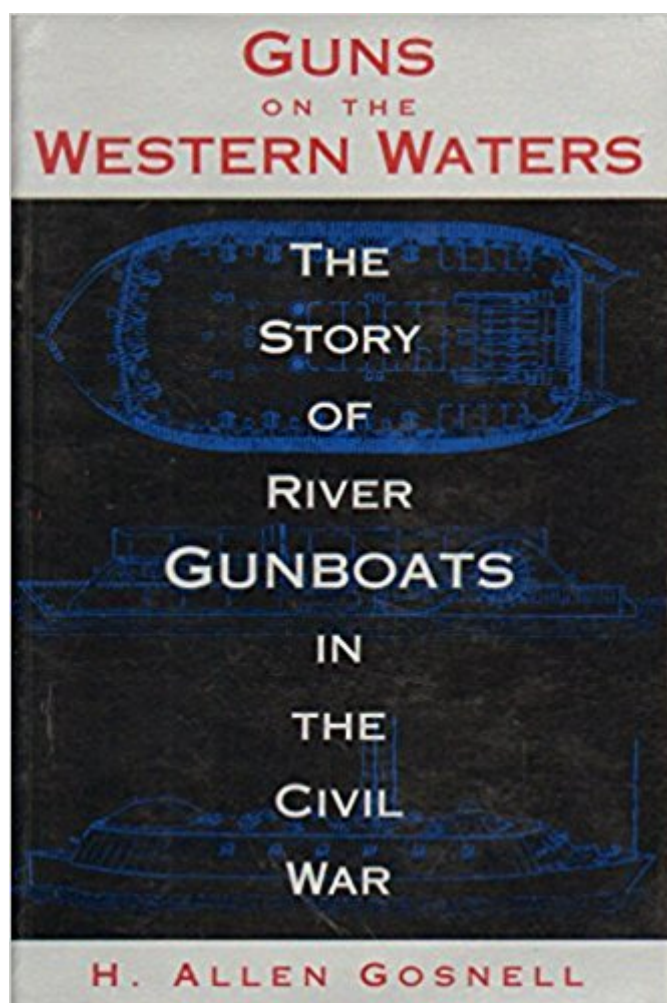


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Guns On The Western Waters: The Story Of River Gunboats In The Civil War (Civil War Paperbacks)



Synopsis

Presents a full, accurate treatment of the important gunboat operations in the western theater of the Civil War. Combining expert knowledge of naval warfare with rigorous historical scholarship, Gosnell's book will be eagerly read by anyone interested in the Civil War or naval history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Presents a full, accurate treatment of the important gunboat operations in the western theater of the Civil War. Combining expert knowledge of naval warfare with rigorous historical scholarship, Gosnell's book will be eagerly read by anyone interested in the Civil War or naval history.

The naval war of the civil war in America is one of the most neglected areas of study and this little book brings focus to it as few do. The number of stars given to this title will trouble some readers: taking into account the value of the book as a history, it doesn't warrant three stars, more like two; basically this is a book that lifts sections of famous memoirs and puts them into a single volume with some editorial comment of little value to those who are well read in the subject; the book is very worthwhile for those who are interested in the Civil War and haven't had a great deal of exposure to its literature. I like the book because it is easy to read and hold, the type is good and the size is comfortable. On the negative there is no index, the table of contents is inadequate, and it has no immediate indication of the contents of the chapters or the work used in them. The author/editor offers such valuable information as "[with the fall of Sabine Pass] it became practically impossible to

frun supplies into the eastern Confederate states from abroad via Texas or Louisiana" (page 143). We are informed that the fall of Vicksburg was important to the Union victory. Did you know there was competition between Admiral Porter and Admiral Farragut? That Farragut was the foster brother of Porter? You didn't learn it here. It is assumed the reader knows enough to identify "Old Tecumseh" as General Sherman. It is further expected the reader will allow the only important battles on the western waters took place on the Mississippi and will be satisfied to learn the story of Vicksburg. One thing disappointing about this work is that the Louisiana State University Press published it. It is a work beneath their standard I fear, even allowing it is about Louisiana and Mississippi. The book is not worthless, just disappointing for those who hoped for a work on the history of the Navy--North and South. For beginners it is worthwhile. If you know something of the Civil War, avoid it, at least, don't spend your money on this.

I found this book to be very unique among the many books about naval aspects of the Civil War. Gosnell openly focuses on the personal accounts of officers and sailors in the Union and Confederate river forces as well as several newspaper columnists that witnessed incidents. After giving the reader a sound overview of the weapons and ships used in the western rivers, Gosnell allows the personal accounts of those that were there to walk the reader through the river war. Gosnell's comments contextualize the personal accounts but do not overshadow them. It's a very effective way of engaging the reader. The negative aspect of the book is that Gosnell overlooks some events, although he openly acknowledges it when he does so. This book would serve as a fine companion for a more chronologically thorough, less-personal CW naval book.

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